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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 6708  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 7821  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 002047

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS, DRL

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: COOL HEADS PREVAIL IN RESPONSE TO KABUL ATTACK

REF: A. NEW DELHI 2011

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 76370

[1](#)C. NEW DELHI 01957

Classified By: PolCouns Ted Osius for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Indian Ministry for External Affairs (MEA) Director for Pakistan Affairs Balasubramanian told Poloffs on July 23 that Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon,s aggressive press statements, alleging Pakistan's complicity in the July 7 Indian Embassy bombing, indicate a downturn in India,s bilateral relationship with the Government of Pakistan. On the heels of the fifth round of the Indo-Pak Composite Dialogue between Menon and his Pakistani counterpart Salman Bashir on July 21-22, Balasubramanian echoed Foreign Secretary Menon's claims of Pakistan-backed terrorism in Kabul and Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), and expressed frustration about Pakistan's perceived unreliable commitment to regional counter-terrorism efforts. Amidst rising tensions in the Indian-Pakistan relationship, however, Balasubramanian reiterated India's commitment to continued diplomatic engagement with Pakistan through the Composite Dialogues and other bilateral talks.

[1](#)2. (SBU) SUMMARY (continued): Poloffs followed up Ref B points with MEA on July 23 and urged continued tempered response from the Indian government. End Summary.

MEA Claims Pakistan is Behind Terrorist Attacks

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[1](#)3. (C) Poloffs met with Indian Ministry for External Affairs (MEA) Director for Pakistan Affairs Balasubramanian in the wake of Indian Foreign Secretary Menon,s harsh media statements, alleging Pakistan,s complicity July 21 in regional terrorism, following the fifth round of Indo-Pak Composite Dialogues in New Delhi. Balasubramanian shared with Poloffs on July 23 that he believes that Pakistan's alleged involvement in the July 7 attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul "crossed the line," noting 40 reported deaths including one MEA colleague, and said it would have a negative effect on overall India-Pakistan relations (Ref A). Balasubramanian also mentioned alleged Pakistani violations of the ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control (LOC), cross-border terrorist infiltration and alleged incitement of

violence in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). This follows the rise of violent attacks in Kashmir by Pro-Pakistan terrorist groups that killed ten soldiers on July 19 and two soldiers on July 21.

#### Continuing Bilateral Dialogues

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¶4. (C) Balasubramanian underscored the Government of India's (GOI) commitment to moving the bilateral relationship forward and "seeing through the dialogue process." He added that the GOI responds to the "will of the people," which supports continued diplomatic engagement with Pakistan; however, he cautioned that continued attacks on Indian installations will undercut public support and may require an "aggressive response" from India.

#### India, No Tit-for-Tat

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¶5. (C) Balasubramanian stressed that it is not in India's interest to retaliate in response to the Kabul attack. There was a time in India's history when GOI would have responded with force but "those times have passed," he said. He recounted that Pakistan was not an issue during the 2004 Indian national election for the first time in recent history. However, he observed that forces in the Pakistan government remain fixated on India. Balasubramanian added that, during the Composite Dialogues, Foreign Minister Bashir voiced Pakistani opposition to the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear

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Initiative. He also stated that "other elements" in Pakistani society may have felt threatened by India's active role in neighboring Afghanistan. India's role in Afghanistan is strictly humanitarian, Balasubramanian declared, and the July 7 attack would not deter development and reconstruction efforts because "that is what the terrorists want to happen."

#### According to MEA, No Leadership in Pakistan

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¶6. (C) During the Composite Dialogues, the GOI hoped to engage in "straight-forward" conversation with Pakistani counterparts communicating the Indian government's deep frustration with the events in Kabul. When asked to evaluate India's relationship with the democratically elected Pakistan People's Party (PPP), he recounted Pakistan Foreign Minister Qureshi's expressed interest in addressing regional terrorism during bilateral meetings in New Delhi in June 2008, only to be overshadowed by the Kabul terrorist incident less than one month later.

¶7. (C) Balasubramanian observed the fragmented nature of Pakistani politics, exclaiming, "No one knows who's in charge." In his view, neither President Musharraf nor Prime Minister Gilani has taken the initiative to follow through with bilateral counter-terrorism commitments, which may have exacerbated the security threat in Pakistan and beyond.

#### Comment: India Goes Global

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¶8. (C) Rising tensions in the bilateral relationship, culminating in the July 7 Kabul attack and subsequent finger-pointing by GOI officials, demonstrate the potential for renewed volatility in the India-Pakistan relationship. However, GOI accusations in India's domestic press have not stirred widespread anti-Pakistan sentiments. In previous years, Indian politicians leveraged Pakistani security violations to call for violent retaliation. The recent Kabul attack could have led to a similar response, but it did not. As noted Ref C, coverage of the Nuclear Initiative pushed speculation about Pakistani complicity in the Kabul attack off India's front pages. The fact that the Composite Dialogues took place in New Delhi after the bombing reaffirms

the GOI's commitment to pursuing diplomatic rapprochement with Pakistan, despite on-going concerns about ISI-sponsored terrorism, and underscores a continuing shift in the Indian political mindset. Indians are increasingly more interested in their promising global future than in their tumultuous regional past. End Comment.

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